DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 024 913 AC 003 505

By- Warren, Virginia B., Ed.
A Treasury of Techniques for Teaching Adults.
National Association for Public School Adult Education, Washington, D.C.
Pub Date 68
Note- 48p.
Available from- National Association for Public School Adult Education, NEA, 1201 16th St., N. W., Washington, D. C. 20036 (HC $.50).
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC Not Available from EDRS.
Descriptors- *Adult Education Programs, *Adult Learning, Classroom Environment, Creative Teaching, Dropout Prevention, Group Discussion, Grouping (Instructional Purposes), *Learning Processes, *Manuals, Participant Involvement, Program Planning, Study Habits, *Teaching Techniques

Public school adult educators, training directors in business and industry, and other group leaders in civic and professional organizations assembled this collection of techniques used by teachers and adults. Among topics discussed are planning an adult education course, grouping adult students, applying creativity to teaching, and preventing dropouts. A lengthy analysis of group discussions is included presenting various goals and techniques. Suggestions are given for ways of helping students study and involving them in the group. (se)

PROCESS WITH MICROFICHE AND PUBLISHER'S PRICES. MICRO-FICHE REPRODUCTION ONLY.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

A TREASURY OF TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING ADULTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL ADULT EDUCATION

AC003505
ED024913

PROCESS WITH MICROFICHE AND PUBLISHER'S PRICES. MICROFICHE REPRODUCTION ONLY.

A TREASURY OF TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING ADULTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL ADULT EDUCATION

ED024913

Permission to reproduce this copyrighted work has been granted to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) and to the organization operating under contract with the Office to Education to reproduce documents included in the ERIC system by means of microfiche only, but this right is not conferred to any users of the microfiche received from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service. Further reproduction of any part requires permission of the copyright owner.

A TREASURY OF TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING ADULTS was edited by Virginia B. Warren, director of publications and promotion, National Association for Public School Adult Education.

The material in this handbook appeared originally in issues of *Techniques for Teachers of Adults,* a newsletter published by the National Association for Public School Adult Education. Consultants who advised on the manuscript include the following persons: James Dermody, director of adult education and community relations, Oak Park, Mich.; Carl Minich, director of adult education, Amherst (N.Y.) Central Adult School; Elmer Mueller, state director of adult education, St. Paul, Minn.; Harrison Otis, director of adult education, Hewlett, New York; Nate Shaw, coordinator of continuing education, Wayne (Mich.) Community Schools; Robert F. Schenz. principal, Westchester Adult School, Los Angeles, Calif.

Published by the National Association for Public School Adult Education, a department of the National Education Association, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036.

Copyright 1964

Third Printing 1968

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 64-17901

Single copy, $1. Discounts on quantity orders, 2-9 copies 10 percent; 10 or more copies, 20 percent. Orders under $2 must be accompanied by cash.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Foreword	Page **v**
Chapter I	**How Do Adults Learn?**	Page **1**
Chapter II	**Creating a Good Climate for Learning**	Page **5**
Chapter III	**How to Plan an Adult Education Course**	Page **10**
Chapter IV	**Grouping the Adult Class**	Page **15**
Chapter V	**Apply Creativity to Your Teaching**	Page **20**
Chapter VI	**Tested Techniques for Discussion**	Page **26**
Chapter VII	**Time Savers—for Teachers and Students**	Page **31**
Chapter VIII	**How to Avoid Dropouts**	Page **35**
Chapter IX	**How to Help Adults Study**	Page **40**
Chapter X	**How Group Involvement Boosts Learning**	Page **45**

FOREWORD

As a teacher of adults you have one of the most challenging jobs in the field of education. Yet, as you have probably discovered, very little information exists to help you do your specialized work. That is why NAPSAE has assembled this collection of tried and proven methods used by teachers of adults in many fields. Ideas for this booklet have come from public school adult educators, training directors in business and industry, armed services educators, vocational educators, men and women in the field of university extension, group leaders in civic and professional organizations.

You'll find in these pages solid, down-to-earth advice on how to make lesson plans, how to group your adult students, how to make your class varied and interesting, how to prevent students from dropping out. Group discussions are analyzed, and you are shown different ways to conduct them for different goals.

Chapters in this booklet appeared originally as early issues of *Techniques for Teachers of Adults,* idea-letter published by the National Association for Public School Adult Education and contributed to by teachers of adults all over the United States.

A Treasury of Techniques for Teaching Adults is part of a series issued by NAPSAE for use by teachers of adults. Others in the series are *When You're Teaching Adults, Counseling and Interviewing Adult Students, Teaching Reading to Adults,* and *How Adults Can Learn More—Faster.*

CHAPTER 1

HOW DO ADULTS LEARN?

"We learn by doing."

"Experience is the best teacher."

Slogans like these have more than a germ of truth in them. They represent wisdom distilled from human experience over a long period of time.

Learning is change—change in an individual's behavior. Behavioral changes do not truly become a part of a person until he has reinforced them through use. For example, a student can memorize the operation of a piece of equipment or a new word for his vocabulary. But he doesn't actually "learn" those things until he practices operating the equipment or using the new word. The student, in short, must be *involved* in the process of learning.

Motivation probably is the most important element of learning. Motivation is the drive which forces a person to move toward a goal. It makes a student want to know, to understand, to believe, to act, to gain a skill.

Most adult students are self-motivated: they attend an adult class because they want to, not because they have to. Yet, because many adults doubt their ability to study and learn or because they fear exposure and ridicule, they need constant re-motivation.

A teacher must recognize the importance of motivation and find ways to bring motivation factors into the learning process. Some of these factors are: the need for security, the need for new experience, the need for recognition, the need for self-esteem, the need for conformity, and the need to help others.

THE LAWS OF LEARNING

There are a number of very basic psychological laws which control and affect student learning. If you hope to achieve any real measure

of success in teaching adults, you must understand these laws. Using them, you can make the learning experience more effective, lasting, and enjoyable for students.

The law of effect—People tend to accept and repeat those responses which are pleasant and satisfying and to avoid those which are annoying. If an adult enrolls in a course expecting to learn a new skill, for example, and quickly finds that he *is* learning it and enjoying the learning process, he will tend to want to keep returning to class. Moreover, he probably will want to enroll in more courses upon completing the first one. In short, "Nothing succeeds like success." You can help your students experience some personal satisfaction from each learning activity and achieve some success in each class period as you help them master a new idea or operation.

The law of primacy—First impressions are the most lasting. This means that those first classes are all important. Early in the course you will find it helpful to arouse the students' interest in the subject matter by giving them an opportunity to discuss their need for the course. You will also want to be sure that the students learn the content right the first time.

The law of exercise—The more often an act is repeated, the more quickly a habit is established. Practice makes perfect—*if* the practice is the right kind. Practicing the wrong thing will become a habit too —one that's hard to break. You should be sure that your students are performing an operation correctly.

The law of disuse—A skill not practiced or a knowledge not used will be largely lost or forgotten. You should recognize the value of repetition for reinforcing newly gained knowledge or skills. Studies have shown that the period immediately following the learning process is the most critical. Important items should be reviewed soon after the initial instruction.

The law of intensity—A vivid, dramatic, or exciting learning experience is more likely to be remembered than a routine or boring experience. This does not mean the classroom should be a circus or a theatre-in-the-round. But, on the other hand, the teachers whose subjects are longest remembered are those who had the ability to "bring their subjects alive." By using vivid examples and other supporting material, your teaching can be dramatic and realistic.

BLOCKS TO LEARNING

In addition to the psychological laws of learning mentioned above, there are feelings, emotions, and attitudes in students which may be blocks to learning. Some of these cannot be controlled by you but the following ones can:

Boredom—The work may be too easy or too hard. The teacher may have failed to motivate the students or to keep their attention.

Confusion—The teacher may create confusion by presenting too many or overly complex ideas. Contradictory statements or failure to relate one step to another also can confuse students.

Irritation—Annoying mannerisms of the instructor, poor human relations, interruptions, and delays can create this block.

Fear—Fear of failure, of ridicule, or of getting hurt are common blocks to learning. It is important to make sure that each student shows some success in each session.

HUMAN RELATIONS AND LEARNING

Student emotions come out in many ways, and it is important for the teacher to recognize these ways. Some of them are: Projection (finding someone else or something else to blame for a weakness—maybe the leader), rationalization (finding an explanation which sounds reasonable but does not get to the real base of the matter), aggressiveness (anger, contempt, discourtesy, loudness), flight (escape from a frustrating situation . . . finding an excuse to stay away from class), resignation (giving up . . . showing little or no interest in the class).

You can help overcome many of these blocking mechanisms by following four basic human relations practices:

1. Help students set reasonable standards for themselves which they can achieve. Most people want to be better than average but, obviously, this is impossible for all if there is to be an average. The teacher should help the student identify those isolated areas in which the student excels and help him realize that satisfaction gained from competence in one area makes up for average ability in another.

2. Help students help themselves. Students sometimes flounder, become frustrated and turn to the teacher for help. The teacher then should be warm and understanding but help the student figure out the difficulty for himself—not work it out for him. This offers an opportunity for development on the part of the student.

3. Keep students informed. Share with your students the plan for the entire course so they will know what is going on and what to expect. Seeing the big picture helps them understand each part of it.

4. Encourage the students to tell you how they see you as a leader of the learning group . . . ways in which your teaching methods are helpful . . . and ways in which you could be of still more help.

Finally, in adult education, the Golden Rule holds as true as ever. Treat your students as you, an adult, wish to be treated.

CHAPTER II

CREATING A GOOD CLIMATE FOR LEARNING

There are four basic conditions for effective learning. Many others are important, but the four listed here are essential:

1. Class atmosphere must be warm, friendly and free from threat. Whenever a student feels that he is rejected by you or by other students, or senses that any action or comment of his is met with only cold appraisal, his anxiety about himself and how he is getting along with others becomes a major concern. When this happens the student has little enthusiasm or energy left for dealing with the problems of learning.
2. New ways of acting should be encouraged. While it is important that the classroom provide a warm emotional climate, this should not become over-protective. Students should have opportunities for experimentation, for venturing into the unknown. This, of course, means protection from ridicule in case mistakes are made during the process of experimentation.
3. The student must gradually learn to become independent of the teacher's learning supports. It is entirely possible that a student will become overly dependent upon his teacher. For example: a student of conversational French may chatter away in class because he knows it pleases the teacher and wins his praise. Outside of class, the same student may seek no opportunities to practice his new language skill. He is motivated by a desire to please the teacher rather than a real desire to learn French.

   On the other hand, it is possible for an adult student to adopt such an extreme attitude of independence toward a teacher or toward other classmates or toward school itself that most of his time and energies are occupied by psychological withdrawal—and eventual "drop out"—as a way of rejecting the learning experience.

The third condition, therefore, means that for effective learning to take place a continuing and interdependent relationship must exist between the teacher and individual students.

4. Finally, for effective learning to take place, there must be effective, three-way communication—from teacher to student, from student to teacher, and from student to student.

Conditions for a good instructional situation do not just happen. Sometimes a teacher, sincerely desiring a good climate for work, mistakenly assumes that it automatically exists. You can, for example, repeatedly tell the students, "I am here to help you. Tell me any problems you may have in trying to understand our lessons." At the same time, the atmosphere may be too cold and forbidding for the student to say honestly and freely, "You talk so fast I can't remember what you say."

A teacher may be personally warm and receptive but lack the skill to help the class create unspoken rules of behavior that support free expression of opinion. One individual might want to communicate freely with his teacher but feels pressure from other members of the class not to respond unless spoken to.

YOU'LL NEED THESE SKILLS

1. The first skill to develop is that of stimulating a clear and self-evident sharing of goals. Curriculum demands from outside the classroom (such as those of a curriculum committee), the purposes of the teacher, and the goals of the students—all these need to be discussed with the students. Through group discussion and planning, these many different goals can be built into a common goal that becomes a strong and treasured possession of students and teacher alike.
2. A second skill is that of developing clear "rules of behavior" for the group. The group needs to know, for example, under what conditions it's permissible to ask a question . . . to make an observation about the way something is being done. How are these standards set—by the teacher or by the entire class? What is the standard of the group about leadership? Do only a few individuals feel free to suggest new activities, ask for help from the teacher, suggesting new activities, or does every student have an opportunity to try being a leader? What are the rules of behavior about com-

pleting a task? As answers to these questions are developed, standards of behavior emerge. These standards should be developed gradually by you and your students working together and talking about the outcome.

3. The third skill relates to the process of student self-evaluation. In order to learn from their own experience adults must constantly evaluate their efforts, re-do work when necessary, and rebuild toward shared goals. It is your responsibility to provide opportunities for this constant evaluation.

HOW TO TEST YOUR LEARNING CONDITIONS

How do you know whether you have created conditions for effective learning? Such conditions exist in your class or group if—

1. There is unrestricted communication.

   In the early years of school, a child carried to the classroom patterns of communication he learned at home. He may have been naive and open—or withdrawn and unresponsive. However, as he progressed through life, no matter how naturally open or communicative he once was, he gradually learned how to restrain and control his communication patterns. By the time he has become an adult he has learned ways to protect himself from real or imagined attack and to display himself to best advantage.

   Therefore, in some adult classes you may not get questions or comments at all when you say, "Are there any questions before I go on and read the rest of the instructions on the test?" You may mistakenly assume that the lack of response means your directions have been clear and concise and that no further explanation is necessary. Instead, the lack of response may mean that the students are afraid to speak up. As we know from our own reaction if asked, when in a large or strange group, if we have any questions, silence may reflect embarrassment or confusion rather than understanding.

   On the other hand, if the atmosphere of the classroom reaches the level of permissiveness where it is safe for a student to say, "Mr. Smith, the illustrations you give are over my head" or "You said you were going to give the directions only once and I don't think that's right", you have suddenly acquired an enormously rich fund of knowledge and insight to help you plan and prepare your work. Only as you and your students are successful in getting a

picture of yourselves as seen by others can you respond adequately to the teaching and learning demands placed upon you.

2. You are not too "bossy."

   If you are to set up conditions for maximum learning, it is necessary to give up some measure of control of the classroom and share this responsibility with members of the class.

   To bring this about, you must bring considerable emotional and social poise into the classroom. A person who feels the need to control or dominate the lives of others may be successful in some endeavors but he is ill equipped to help others learn.

   An individual—be it adult student or teacher—who constantly needs to defend or protect his own way of working and thinking has little opportunity to change and grow.

ASSIGNMENTS ARE MOTIVATED

Since many adult courses require students to do outside assignments, we should look at the role motivation plays here. When teachers simply tell students to read a certain number of pages or perform some other specific task, they are not motivating students to do that work. Instead, teachers should help students see how the outside assignment will help them achieve their own goals.

Naturally, this approach requires work on your part too. For you must help the students think through why they should know the subject and how and when they can use it. Only then can the student clearly define the desired learning outcomes. The assignment then given to the students should include these points:

1. the lesson objective (what he should be able to do by studying the assignment)
2. to determine why the subject is important to him
3. where to find the necessary study material
4. what he will be expected to do or know in the class period.

THERE'S PLENTY OF ACTION

Learning, as we have noted, is an active process and the action must focus primarily on the student rather than the teacher. You should, therefore, plan a variety of participating activities for the student—observing, listening, thinking, remembering, imagining, writing, answering, questioning, feeling, touching, moving, agreeing, disagreeing, and

discussing. The more participation on the part of the student, the more learning will take place. Put another way, the more your students use their various senses, the more they will learn.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES ARE RECOGNIZED

If the learning process is to be a truly living process, you must recognize that individual differences exist among students. No two people learn at the same rate. A student's experience and background in a particular subject, for instance, may vary a few weeks or many years from that of another student. The teacher who recognizes these differences and plans his teaching accordingly will help each student learn as much as he is capable of learning. Here are some ways to determine individual differences:

Student discussion after a presentation by the teacher. You may note that one student absorbed almost all the material, while another student digested only isolated bits. The discussion also may help you find out why these differences exist.

Student Records. If your school has guidance and counselor services for adults, they will be your biggest help in detecting differences. Their records will show achievement scores and intelligence test scores. Educational achievement (in years) sometimes will be helpful, too.

Private conference. Through this method you can get to know the students as individuals. Learning difficulties and personal problems which may be interfering with learning can be discussed. Information obtained in private conferences often can help you adjust course requirements to meet students' needs.

One way of allowing for individual differences in a group is semi-independent activity which allows a student some time to work alone and permits more individual instruction from you. Under this plan, the students meet as a group most of the time but for a part of each class or of occasional classes, they carry on alone or as parts of small groups. You can help individuals or small groups as the need arises. Students who might hesitate to ask questions before the entire group often feel free to ask them privately or in front of a small group. Also, since students will interpret information differently, questions handled individually can be answered more effectively and will not take up the time of the class.

CHAPTER III

HOW TO PLAN AN ADULT EDUCATION COURSE

Planning an adult education activity is a cooperative task of teacher and the student. Experiences of the past and research findings of the present indicate that adult education classes are more successful if they come close to the concerns that students feel are important.

People enroll in adult education activities for many reasons: They want to be with other people, to visit, and have fun; they want answers to important questions and they want to learn new skills; they are curious about themselves and the world in which they live; they want people to know them as individuals; they want to get ahead. An adult education program cannot meet all these needs but it can meet more of them than teachers sometimes dream possible.

The teacher's responsibilities are no lighter if planning the course becomes a cooperative rather than a solo experience . . . nor are they more difficult. Rather, the skills and responsibilities of cooperative planning are different from those of individual planning. Some of the steps in cooperative planning are defined and described in the chapter to provide teachers with practical steps they can follow in planning courses which meet the maximum number of interests of the greatest number of students.

What is the first step to follow in planning an adult education course? Is it to ask oneself, "What subject matter shall the students learn?" Or is it to examine a fuller and more comprehensive question such as, "What are the overall purposes of the course?"

Assuming most teachers would select the latter question, then it is necessary to think about what a full statement of purposes includes. The purpose of adult education is not only to learn subject matter but the development of skills, attitudes, and appreciations and the opportunity for individual growth and development. Out of the comprehensive statement of the purposes of the class will come the clues

which enable the instructor not only to organize content but to organize that essential of all teaching—the learning experience.

When we say that we learn through experience or that experience is the best teacher, we mean that if content is to be meaningful it must be related to deep and significant interests, needs and goals of the learner. It also means that students learn best through participating actively rather than simply hearing or reading words about the activities of others.

In planning the learning experience the teacher has the responsibility of identifying activities within which the students can acquire a meaningful form of participation. This may be the actual "doing" of an activity—upholstering a chair, practicing a swim stroke, or operating an office machine. The learning experience, however, must often be limited to some form of vicarious experience. Reading is one of the most frequent approaches to vicarious experience and most adult teachers plan for extensive use of the library and frequent reliance on magazines and books in the development of plans for the course.

The experience of reading can be enriched and deepened by observation. Field trips and a wide variety of visual aids extend the opportunities for a student to experience a learning situation through observation.

Listening is another form of learning experience and adequate plans for an adult education class provide opportunities for students to listen to the instructor, and to other students, and sometimes to records, tape recordings and radio broadcasts.

Certainly a basic skill in planning a course is the ability to organize ideas and materials. But even more important and fundamental is the ability of the teacher to work with and understand people. The goal of any teacher is, of course, to be able to organize materials and ideas and to be able to relate to people and involve their need for learning in the plan.

Involving students in planning an adult education activity does not mean that the teacher no longer makes decisions about what shall be taught or that students pool their ignorance about the subject matter.

Both the teacher and the students have definite obligations. Strict limits are imposed on the kinds of decisions that can be made by either the teacher or the students.

- Description of the course, what it includes, is the responsibility of the teacher, and no amount of student participation will change it.

- While the teacher determines the units of instruction to be included in the course, the students may help decide how much time should be spent on the various units.
- Students and teachers together can decide which of several alternative units are most useful to members of their particular class.
- Students may suggest that special emphasis be placed on certain aspects of instruction within a unit.

HOW TO INVOLVE STUDENTS IN PLANNING AN ACTIVITY

1. List possible topics for study that fall within the general description of the course.
2. Develop with the students general principles that will aid them in the selection of topics particularly relevant to them. Examples of these principles might be:
   a. Perceived purpose of the class: (information only, academic credit, recreational interest, job advancement);
   b. Amount of time to be spent by students in outside study and discussion;
   c. Availability of consultants in the community (or within the class) with special skills and knowledges.
3. Make an expanded outline of the topics as a guide to helping students know what they are selecting when they decide upon topics to be given particular emphasis.
4. Develop a plan for student participation throughout the entire course which will enable students to state and restate goals, select areas of subject matter to receive emphasis, and suggest types of learning experience meeting these interests. Examples of ways in which student participation can be stimulated are:
   a. Standing committees established for the duration of the class
   b. "Buzz-groups" (See page 21)
   c. Class discussion of "next-steps"
   d. Interest-finding questionnaires
5. Continuous replanning by the teacher of the course in terms of the interests and directives of the students.
6. Teacher methods and techniques should be suited to the level of development of the class and the maturity of their understanding of the subject matter. No two classes are identical in nature and each one, therefore, must be tested and judged by the teacher.

a. Use of norm tests, biographical information, individual conferences are examples of individual maturity measures.
b. General class discussion topics, degree of class acceptance of democratic methods, observation of types of leadership and fellowship displayed are examples of class maturity measures.

7. Cooperative planning and the socialization of the learning process so necessary for interaction of the students are greatly dependent upon the teacher's relationship to the students.
   a. As the organizer of the class activity the teacher should avoid making all of the decisions and having the action of the class evolve entirely around him.
   b. Delegation of authority and the steady encouragement of freedom and initiative combined with a sense of shared responsibility are the class attitudinal goals of the adult teacher.

COURSE PLANNING CONSIDERS VARYING CLASS ACTIVITIES

The successful adult education class is a social kaleidoscope of activities, and the successful adult education teacher plans for the variance in techniques necessary to capture the particular mood of the class for the best learning experience for the topic at hand. The responsibility of the teacher lies in the careful thought which must be given to possible types of activities in which the class may be involved, whether consciously or unconsciously, at various points in the class presentation. This does not mean that the teacher plans each step of the class period in working on a topic, but it does mean that he is cognizant of the need for a shift in technique of presentation and is capable of suggesting or respecting the movement of the class toward a different type of class activity than the one in which the class is presently engaged.

He might recognize such various class activities as:

1. The class is an audience for the teacher.
2. The class is reacting to teacher questions.
3. Mutual discussion is being held with the teacher as a participant or observer.
4. Class is engaged in mutual criticism in which the teacher may hear reflections of dissatisfactions with the course.
5. Individuals may be working separately with individual assistance and supervision from the teacher.

6. Class drill in unison or individually may be held under the supervision of the teacher.

The natural fluidity of movement of class activity in a successful adult education class readily demonstrates the necessity for a "change of pace" that exists in every level of educational experience. This kaleidoscopic classroom activity is an attention getter that no adult education teacher can afford to overlook in his planning of a course regardless of the subject matter area.

There are many ways of organizing plans for an adult education class. Some teachers use a daily lesson plan; others think they achieve more flexibility by using a guide, similar to the one below, which reminds them of basic goals.

The sample planning chart shown here is not presented as a recommended or preferred plan. Rather, it is reproduced as a suggested approach for teachers who like to visualize in their plan various elements of a learning experience.

SAMPLE COURSE PLANNING CHART

Class: Home Gardening
Unit: Control of insect pests

Understandings To Be Gained	Problems To Be Solved	Activities To Be Experienced	Skills To Be Acquired	Resources To Be Consulted
That a knowledge of the life history of insect pests is necessary for their effective control.	What special control measure should be used to combat insects in various stages of their life cycle.	Examination of the larvae and fully grown moth. Observation of life cycle habits (eating, etc.).	Specific selection and proper use of insecticides or repellents.	Government bulletins, advertising leaflets for commercial insecticides, background experience of students.
That the protection of the enemies of insects is an important aspect of their control.	How to develop an appreciation of the importance of snakes, frogs, toads (as well as birds) in combatting insects.	Observation of various forms of animal life which feed on insects.	Proper planning of garden to attract the natural enemies of insects.	Special presentation by the instructor followed by lecture.

CHAPTER IV

GROUPING THE ADULT CLASS

WHY GROUP?

Some adult education classes have 40, 60 or more students. Obviously, you cannot give the individualized kind of help to 60 people that you can give to 4 or 5 smaller groups of students.

But what if the class has only 20 students? Or even 8, 10 or 12? Is it still necessary to divide it into smaller groups? There are basic advantages to grouping:

1. Individuals have different rates of learning. The rate of learning varies from class to class and from subject to subject. The student who may be very slow in catching on with algebra may find that he picks up English grammar quite rapidly. In any one class, however, there will be students who learn a particular subject or skill at about the same rate. Pairing these students—or grouping them together—gives students of similar rates of learning an opportunity to progress together.
2. People learn differently. Some students whose reading comprehension is high learn best from direct and concentrated attention to printed material. Others are helped in their comprehension through the presentation of visual concepts. Some students find that their best learning occurs when they are able to talk about ideas and concepts with others. For these individuals, grouping provides an opportunity for the teacher to develop teaching techniques that can be "targeted" on several small groups within the classroom which have differentiated learning abilities.
3. The development of classroom groups makes it possible for the teacher to give individual attention. Rather than having to develop, for example, 20 different approaches to members of the class, the teacher can, through intelligent grouping, develop (let's say) 4 different approaches which will meet the needs of various groups of students of 5 members each.

4. Individuals learn from each other. A cluster of small groups gives an opportunity for interaction between students that is far greater than when each individual is but one member of a much larger group. The responsibility of the teacher for supervision of the learning experiences is therefore as great and as constant in a classroom divided into several smaller groups as it is when the class meets together as a single group.

WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE?

Different groupings are required for different purposes and only if you have clearly in mind the purposes to be served can you decide on the best way to group your class. There are many bases upon which groupings can be made:

1. Learning potential of the students for the subject being taught.
2. Personality Characteristics. Every class contains the shy student, the aggressive student, the "know-it-all", the "show me" and all the other personality types which teachers come to expect as a part of their class. Whether all these personality "likes" and "unlikes" should be grouped, together or separated, depends on the instructional goals of the teacher as well as his experience and background.
3. Background knowledge of the students. Whether it be an auto mechanics class, a class for foreign-born students learning the English language, or any other class offered in the adult schools, there usually are wide differences in the actual knowledge brought to the classroom as a result of the prior experiences of the participants. This background knowledge should be taken into account as you decide on the kinds of groupings to be made within your class.

DIFFERENT GROUPINGS FOR DIFFERENT GOALS

1. Academic Learning. Although there are no hard and fast rules about this, most teachers have found that in teaching such subjects as reading, spelling, and writing to students in adult elementary classes—or any of the academic classes in high school completion work—grouping people together in accordance with their learning ability is usually best. This makes it possible for individuals to acquire new knowledge at a rate most congenial to their intellectual

capacities, while they are securing help and reinforcement from other students at somewhat the same learning level.

2. Project learning. There are many areas of academic learning, however, where a strong case can be made for heterogeneous (diversified) grouping. One of these is the social studies or any other kind of activity where a diversified method of learning is useful. For example, in a social study class—or in a group receiving training in trade or industry—considerable depth in the learning pattern can be developed by a group of mixed learning ability which has been assigned a project to complete. In this grouping it would, of course, be highly desirable to have a person whose reading comprehension is high, a person whose skills in public speaking are very good, a person who can express himself well in written English, and an individual who has the ability to make diagrams or other visual representation of abstract material. One of the values of this kind of grouping (where many different kinds of levels and experiences are brought together) is that it teaches consideration for other people and an appreciation of different kinds of learning skills.
3. In skill areas—art, music, crafts and vocational classes, decisions as to whether heterogeneous groupings are to be made must be based on many facts. In general, however, experience seems to favor the grouping together of students of diversified skill and learning ability as a means of stimulating imagination, inducing creativeness and developing appreciation of different styles and modes of expression.

HOW TO DECIDE WHO GOES IN WHICH GROUP?

Most adult students enter the classroom without benefit of a battery of test results already developed and made available to the teacher for his perusal. Except in rare instances, there are no personality profiles, no records of mental maturity, and no diagnostic evaluation based on standardized tests for adult students. (Of course, when it is possible for the adult teacher to have access to counseling and guidance services or have the opportunity of administering standardized tests, the results of these are of the greatest possible importance in deciding how to group.) In the absence of this, however, the teacher himself must secure the data out of the classroom experience itself as to which individuals can work most cooperatively and creatively with others.

1. What Are They Interested In? You can find out the students' interests through oral discussion and written data. The easiest way to begin an interest inventory is to stimulate class discussion on what each student wants to learn. While this discussion is going on you can make notes (never keeping it a secret from students that you are making notes), which will indicate the levels of learning and interest of each student. In a class in elementary English, for example, you could determine particular areas of subject matter which could be followed by various groups. You could also discover the extent of vocabulary development, grammatical awareness, and factual knowledge of each student. An interest inventory may be developed by asking each student to write a short essay or paragraph on what he wants to get out of the class. Many of the same kinds of data as those indicated in the oral interview can be gleaned. However, it is hard to determine from the written inventory some of the personality factors you may need to know.
2. How Do They Group Themselves? It doesn't take a clinical psychologist to observe which students like to work together. If you want to bring together psychologically congenial groups—or, in different situations, if you want to do the exact opposite and break up "cliques"—you can go at this in several ways. One method is to observe which students come into class together, what conversation groups form during the class break, and the ways in which individuals ask for support or guidance from other class members during group discussion. ("I suppose Dr. Smith will differ with me but . . ." or "Like Mrs. Rollins said, I agree that . . .").

   It is also perfectly possible and comfortable for you to ask individuals to write on a piece of paper the names of other students they would like to work with. First make sure that the students have had some opportunity to work together so they will have some basis for making a decision.

GROUPS WILL CHANGE

The suggestions given above are meant to be helpful only in starting preliminary groupings. Every teacher should bear in mind—and every member of the class should know—that as the work of the class pro-

gresses, as teachers and students come to know each other better, as interests become more diversified and branch out, and as the need and importance of new projects develop, new groups can and should be formed from time to time. Not only will the rate of learning and the interests of students change, but the actual number of individuals enrolled in the class will frequently change. Losses, or additions, if they occur, should be spread evenly throughout the entire class group.

IT ISN'T EASIER ON THE TEACHER

A beginning teacher may think that setting up several small learning groups within the class is simply a way of making life easier for the teacher. After all, with three or four groups at work building their own motivation and involvements, far less strain would be expected on the teacher than from keeping twenty or thirty or forty individuals constantly engaged throughout the entire classroom period. While with groupings the teacher does not need to display his abilities to all individuals in the group at once, his responsibility for supervising the learning of the various groups remains very high. The teacher must maintain close contact with the various learning groups. The groups must come together into a total classroom situation frequently enough so the teacher knows how much learning is taking place.

Groups are just one of many devices that teachers of adults must use skillfully to help students learn.

Grouping is not done, for example, when a common body of information is being given to the students by means of a lecture, film or student report. And there are times when the students need opportunities for individual work and individual instruction.

CHAPTER V

APPLY CREATIVITY TO YOUR TEACHING

WITH A SPARK OF IMAGINATION

Interesting and worthwhile adult education classes hinge almost entirely on the variety and usefulness to the student of the teaching methods used. Students can be caught up in your enthusiasm and become absorbed in every detail of practical knowledge. Or they can yawn, stare out the window, and get that glazed-eye look that means boredom. By applying imagination and variety to your methods, your classes can have a never-ending air of growth and excitement to them. Here are some ways to consider:

PLAN A CLASS PROJECT

Student projects are great interest-holding tools for the AE teacher. For example, an exhibit prepared by the class, can be a center of steady interest. The exhibit can be a progressively developing project or one that is changed every few weeks. It can be planned jointly by the class members and teacher, with students making many of the decisions.

Some points to keep in mind as you and your class prepare your exhibit:

1. Keep it simple, so the message can be grasped quickly. If the exhibit appears difficult to understand the class will show little enthusiasm about the project. Avoid that exhibit bugaboo: clutter.
2. Have class members bring in as much of the material as possible. They'll usually be happy to bring things they have at home or from local sources with which they have contact.
3. Limit the reading matter to a few words. A "big splash" of a few words that are short and to the point will make it more attention-

catching—both for the students and any outsiders who happen to drop in.

4. Use colors boldly, but wisely. The whole mood of the exhibit will be controlled by the students' choice of colors. Have them decide whether they want a mood of gaiety, dignity, or solemnity, and build the color-scheme around it. Check your colors against the lighting in the room. It may change them completely. If you are not sure about colors and lighting effects, use the students or the art teacher as consultants.
5. Use action and motion, if possible. Objects which move in a project attract much attention. Simple animation, turntables, etc., can easily be contrived by one of the men in your class.

TRY THESE TECHNIQUES

The "Buzz" Group Discussion—is a very natural technique that students may be organized into easily. It encourages everyone to feel free and comfortable in participating . . . the flow of ideas increases as students stimulate one another . . . each individual quickly grasps the responsibility to think and make contributions . . . the students work out answers for themselves, therefore making the ideas more meaningful . . . the group unity grows.

To Organize: (a) Tell the class briefly what the task is and how they will share in it; (b) Divide the class into sub-groups of four to seven people; (c) Set a relatively short length of time (five to fifteen minutes) for each sub-group to discuss the topic; (d) Have one of the students collect the findings or decisions of each sub-group and report them back to the class; (e) Follow-up with a full class-discussion of the report; (f) Ask the class to evaluate its accomplishments.

The Round-Table Discussion—is a good reliable way to involve students in class learning. With four to six students representing different viewpoints of a subject in which they have a background or formulated opinion, the remaining class members can "listen in" on a fast-moving panel; a follow-up of questions from them is important. This method often has the element of suspense . . . the raising of questions and answers as the class thinks of them . . . the creating of interest and participation by the students . . . the covering of a large amount of subject matter well and easily.

To Organize: (a) Seat the panel members in a semi-circle with a student leader in the center; (b) If necessary, have each student on the panel make a small foldover card showing his first name; (c) Work with the panel in front of the entire class (perhaps in the preceding session) in organizing the content and emphasis of a series of short presentations; (d) During the panel, urge all students to think of and write down one or two provocative comments they would like to make; (e) Ask either the panel leader or someone from the class itself to lead the discussion that will inevitably take place between the panelists and members of the class.

Role-Playing—is an enjoyable and productive way of learning. Two types can be used: students acting as themselves or in "roles." This rewarding technique is often used in sales training classes, courses in human relations, or any other activity where the emphasis is on learning more about the ways in which people relate to each other. Role-playing teaches the important skill of "putting yourself in someone else's shoes."

To Organize: (a) Select a particular point of skill or attitude to illlustrate; (b) Describe the characters the participants are to play; (c) Have the class select participants rather than by teacher-assignment; (d) Give participants 10-15 minutes to prepare themselves for the presentation, meanwhile asking the class to choose one or two issues or problems to observe; (e) Start and continue action until interest is at peak—this may vary from 5 to 20 minutes; (f) Follow-up by providing opportunity for class members to ask questions of the participants and vice-versa.

Example of role-playing: Teacher wants to put over the idea of how an inattentive sales person in a store affects a customer. One student takes the part of the customer; another the sales person. The two then "act out" how they think the two persons would act; what they would say and do.

The Symposium—Consists of two or more brief talks on different phases of same topic. It is usually followed by a discussion or question period. It introduces a wide variety of experience and knowledge of the subject . . . holds class interest and attention by the change of voices and breaking up of the time-span. Here are three different methods:

(a) Select (or have the class select) two to four students and let them work out their own topic and viewpoints; (b) Divide the class into sub-groups for 10-15 minutes of discussion on a topic with which they're familiar, then have the three or four leaders present their viewpoints with the class raising questions afterwards; (c) Have two to four give a talk, then have them act as a panel carrying on a discussion before drawing in the class.

MAKE THE ROOM ATTRACTIVE

Students quickly observe and are affected by the background atmosphere of the classroom itself. This atmopshere should be appealing, warm and inviting. Involve the students in developing attractive displays. Let them share the responsibility for keeping the room neat. Here are some ways to make your students feel at home in the classroom:

1. Try and secure good lighting in the entire room. The class members should be able to see easily what you're writing on the blackboard, demonstrating or trying to explain. Should a light develop a flicker, see if it can be changed right away so that no one will be distracted from learning.
2. Be sure the room is neat and organized. Before and after each class-meeting, check to see that the chairs are placed in order, books or papers have been put in appropriate places and blackboards have been thoroughly erased (unless material is to remain until next meeting). Any papers accidentally dropped near the wastebasket can be put in it. (And this is sure to stand you in good stead with any other teacher with whom you share the room).
3. Encourage changing the seating arrangement to make it flexible and to complement the particular teaching method you are using. Some are more suitable to one type than others and enhance the objectives of the meeting's subject matter. Don't hesitate to do this every week for several weeks as your methods or techniques vary.
4. Eliminate inside or outside noises that tend to interfere with the hearing of the class. Shutting the door to the room, changing the seating arrangement and the intensity of your speech will help this. Projecting your voice somewhat while retaining your normal pitch will make it easier for the class to hear.

5. Brighten the room's appearance with displays. Utilize the available wall space to the best advantage by arranging tasteful displays on a current phase in the course study. Students usually will be happy to help and pleased to have their work in the displays.

SHORT CUTS TO SUCCESSFUL DEMONSTRATION

Demonstrations need advance preparation to be worthwhile. This requires time, thought and gathering of all the necessary equipment. The following pointers will help you plan your next demonstration:

1. Prepare in advance by analyzing everything that is to be done.
2. Be ready to begin without delay by having all tools, materials and supplies in readiness on your desk or table.
3. Gather the class around you so the students can see everything that is taking place.
4. Prepare the students by explaining in advance what is going to happen; call attention to the key points to be noticed.
5. Give the demonstration slowly and deliberately so each step can be clearly seen and understood.
6. Explain each step after its completion.
7. Provide an opportunity for questions after each step, even if they interrupt the demonstration.
8. If possible, give each student a chance to operate the demonstration.
9. Conclude with a summary; then open the demonstration for questions, to clear up any confusion and to evaluate.

SIX WAYS TO STIMULATE LEARNING

Here is a review of some methods that may be familiar to you. But, in reading through these, some fresh ideas may come to you. Using one or several of them can help make every session stimulating.

1. Lecture—the old standby. Many times this method is still the best—It is efficient when introducing a new study area, summarizing large amounts of information, and arousing interest by drawing upon your larger experience. It is limited by a one-way reach to your students. This can be offset by encouraging class participation in follow-up discussion and by using blackboards.

2. Forum Dialogue—two students carrying on a public conversation concerning a topic of interest to the class. This can be immensely useful in smaller adult education classes. At the pitch of student provocation, you can invite the class to join in the conversation.
3. Debate—two well-prepared adults arguing for and against an issue. If done in an easy, relaxed manner, this can lead to an exceptional class session. It is an excellent device for sharpening understanding of controversial issues. You need to plan in advance with students the presentation of subject matter and ways to utilize the emotion in their thoughts as part of a stimulant to learning.
4. Group Interview—this unique method calls for a student to act as an inquiring reporter among the class members. Stopping here and there in the circle, he stirs up enthusiasm and facts about the the subjects and then the discussion is thrown open to everyone. The students should have some advance help in preparing to do this.
5. Movie—substitute one or two movies for a controversial class session. You can instruct students profitably in course material using this method. After viewing the film, a discussion of it can be carried on by the class.
6. Television-viewing—this can complement some phase of the class study if a particular type of program is scheduled at the time the class meets. Check the newspapers and TV magazines ahead of time, and then, if the schedule works out, bring a portable set to the classroom or take the class to the TV room for a group-viewing of a program. Informal discussion by the class afterwards is enjoyable and worthwhile.

CHAPTER VI

TESTED TECHNIQUES FOR DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION FOR WHAT?

Discussion, particularly in its "problem-solving" and "discovery" aspects, has been called the learning method of democracy. We see discussion being used wherever we go—in families, labor unions, civic clubs, the highest levels of government, religious groups, and parent-teacher groups. People discuss whenever they form into any kind of group. It is natural, then, that the discussion method of teaching has become, without doubt, the basic method of adult education. Mastery of this method is among the most essential requirements of the leader of adults. As a teaching method, discussion is used for the following purposes:

1. To reach decisions or solve problems
2. To "internalize" or reinforce ideas and concepts
3. To progress from the known toward the unknown by various processes of deductive reasoning
4. To determine if a particular body of content has been mastered

The first two uses of discussion listed above might be called exploratory learning. The second two might be called factual learning. Each of these two kinds of discussion calls for a different teaching technique on the part of the instructor.

EXPLORATORY LEARNING

Problem-solving: One of the most complex forms of discussion and one requiring great skill on the part of the teacher is that in which the "answer" is not known by the teacher in advance or when there is no single answer. Examples of this kind of discussion might include: (a) members of the class determining for themselves what kinds of

student participation would bring about the greatest learning under certain circumstances; (b) trying to think through, in a current events class, what should be the United States' position in respect to "co-existence" with communism; and (c) discussion in a citizenship class on the meaning of the phrase "pursuit of happiness" as used in the U. S. Constitution.

"Internalizing" ideas: Group discussion is useful in helping students "internalize" (make a part of themselves) knowledge which otherwise might never become more than a series of facts in a textbook. For example, students in an American history class who are discussing the Golden Age of American politics preceding the American Civil War, will develop a much more complete feeling of what the term means and why this period was so designated if they discuss the question among themselves. The insights and understanding that they will then receive will come from their own experience and give personal and contemporary meaning to the words in the book and/or to the presentations of the teacher.

In Americanization and citizenship classes, it is particularly important that all members of the class have ample opportunity to discuss with each other, social, historical, or literary concepts in terms of their own cultural values and appreciation.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN EXPLORATORY LEARNING

The purpose of "exploratory learning" is not to impart factual knowledge but to create new ideas, develop insights, and bring about understanding. In helping these learning processes take place, you find yourself in the role of a "leader" who helps stimulate, focus, guide, clarify, and summarize the discussion. In the beginning, you will help in all of these ways. However, as the class moves along, individual members will become increasingly important in stimulating, focusing, guiding, clarifying, and summarizing.

Your main task is to build and maintain a learning procedure which enables each individual student to contribute more and more of his own background and growing field of knowledge. Specifically:

- You help the students select the problems they want to discuss.
- You encourage members of the class to check and make sure that all points of view are given a chance to be heard.

- You help the group seek and explore the facts or values behind opinions expressed.
- You help members of the group make decisions as to whether or not the discussion is sticking to the subject.
- You make sure that some summary is made from time to time and that transitions are provided to the next phase of the subject.
- Some discussion time should be spent between you and members of the group to determine the desired goals of the class. A discussion of this kind helps make the final learning activities of the class something "owned" and shared by the entire class rather than by you alone, who, somewhat arbitrarily, imposes them upon members of the class.
- In closing, either you or someone in the class reviews, as objectively as possible, the points of view which have been expressed and presents for the approval of the class any agreements, new ideas, new knowledge, or solutions which seem to have been reached.

ACQUIRING INFORMATION

Group discussion can be used to extend or develop factual knowledge. An illustration of this method of learning would be that of a teacher in an auto mechanics class, giving instruction in the structure and functioning of a carburetor by asking questions of the class. Using this method, the instructor would begin with what information, background, and experience the students already have and, by grouping all of this into a total experience and adding such new knowledges as are required, help the unknown become known. This method of instruction is particularly useful where logical processes of reasoning are involved.

Question and answer recitation: Although "drill" in the old sense has little learning value—it is much better for the student to *use* his newly-acquired knowledge. Every teacher therefore should occasionally review orally with members of the class progress that has been made. The so-called "recitation period" (a) helps your students determine what portions of the content are not clear or not fully understood, and (b) shows you how well various areas of content have been covered.

HOW TO USE QUESTIONS

In order for discussion to be meaningful to all members of the class and in order to get all members to participate, it is sometimes necessary to

use a questioning technique. For example, one student may use a term that is familiar to you but new to other members of the class. Asking for further explanation helps to insure that everyone understands.

Questions will be determined largely by your lesson objective. If a point is touched on in the discussion which you want to emphasize so that all class members will be sure to hear and understand it, a carefully phrased question can lead to an expansion and clarification of the point. In short, keep students explaining until their ideas are clearly expressed and the entire group understands.

After asking a question, the teacher should be patient and give the students a chance to react. The teacher, after all, already has an answer in mind before he asks the question. The students should have time to find an answer and think about it. This thinking process takes time. The more difficult the question, the more time students will need.

If you notice puzzled expressions after you've asked a question, ask the same question again several times with a different phrasing each time, until you're sure the entire class understands it. There is a technique for reading the number and frequency of those puzzled expressions. That is to build up to your key question by using several secondary questions. This "warming up" process leads your students to the main questions. (Sometimes the students can phrase it better in their own language. Don't be offended if some student says, "So, what you mean is . . .")

A vital point to remember in preparing and using questions is that you want to create discussion, not merely get answers. Therefore, the teacher should avoid questions that can be answered "yes" or "no." Leading questions often begin with "how" or "why."

PROVIDE THE SETTING FOR DISCUSSION

The physical environment has an important psychological effect on a group and should be thought out in advance by the teacher. If possible, the group should be seated comfortably in a circle or around oblong tables formed into a large square. The important thing is for each person to be able to hear and see all others easily. You should have a place within the circle. Then, of course, the room should be heated, lighted and ventilated so that everyone feels both comfortable and alert.

The room should be equipped with a blackboard, or with some other device for making a record of group progress. A blackboard, if avail-

able, has the advantage that the record of suggested discussion topics or problems may be easily erased and amended. This same virtue, though, presents a limitation, since erasure destroys records which perhaps the class may need later on. Many teachers have come to rely on large sheets of newsprint thumb-tacked to an easel, and black crayons for keeping records. As a sheet is finished by the class, the teacher or other leader can throw it over the easel.

The values of keeping records of the content of group discussions are both immediate and long-range. Immediately, it emphasizes for the group the genuineness and importance of what students and the teacher are saying. More remotely, it furnishes a basis for a review of the progress of the class. Usually it is desirable to have a recorder of group discussion, in addition to the notes the teacher makes. The recorder's record can help the class, if necessary, to fill in the notes usually provided by the teacher.

PLANNING THE DISCUSSION

The first step in planning a discussion is the same as that for any other teaching method. Decide what your learning objectives are to be. What do you want the students to get out of the discussion? Once you have these objectives firmly established in your own mind, you can plan for the effective use of discussion topics presented both by you and by students. There are several points to consider:

- Have questions ready to use that will open areas of discussion. (For example: "Where do you think it important to start?" or "What are some of the things you have learned you want to question?")
- Know as much as possible in advance about the personalities, backgrounds and opinions of your students so that you can recognize student needs.
- Help each student do what he does best—summarize, provide new information, analyze ideas, or evaluate ideas.
- Make assignments in advance which will provide a background for discussion so that students will feel free to participate and will have some information in common.
- Be prepared to suggest sources of information so that students may pursue the subject further if they want to.

CHAPTER VII

TIME SAVERS – FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Time is the most precious possession we have. We don't have an unlimited supply of minutes, hours, and days, but often we act as if we do. We frequently waste time. We throw it away sometimes in big chunks, usually just letting it slip through our fingers in dribbles. We don't stop to think how those dribbles add up.

Time is particularly precious to teachers and students. The mountai of man's knowledge is growing at such speed that one individual, in one lifetime, can only hope to chip away a small amount to take home and use. Every second a student wastes, while accumulating his supply of knowledge, is a loss to him. Every second a teacher wastes, while planning or conducting his class, is a loss to each of his students.

TIME HAS FIVE ENEMIES

We've all heard the expression "killing time." Ever wonder what villains conspire to commit this crime? They are:

1. Procrastination. We make bold plans, then wait till tomorrow or the next day, or the next, to carry them out. Somehow we never get around to them.
2. Habit. Nothing is so habit forming as wasting time. The more time you waste and fritter away, the harder it is to buckle down and get things done. Luckily, constructive use of time is habit-forming, too. Have you ever heard the saying, "if you want to get something done, ask a man who's extremely busy?"
3. Throwing Away Scraps. People who have never learned how to use bits and pieces of time constructively are guilty of killing time by inches—or seconds. They don't realize how much can be done in a half-hour, or a spare five minutes.

4. Excuses! Excuses! Most of us waste more time explaining why we haven't done something than it would have taken us to do it.
5. Disorganization. Time is lost when a person jumps from one thing to another, without finishing anything. Inadequate planning and poor organization of records and files cause many hours of wasted time.

HOW YOU CAN SAVE CLASS TIME

The following time-saving tips were gleaned from an in-service course offered by the Baltimore (Md.) Public Schools. One session was a workshop on the topic "Time," which small work groups attacked from four different angles. They emerged with lists of practical time-saving suggestions for the mechanics and management of an adult class.

Be A Clock-Watcher

Clock-watching is an excellent habit, when it's done for the good cause of saving and using time. Watch it so you can start the class on time, not a few minutes late; so you can end the class on the dot (not a few minutes early.) Minutes add up, remember?

Keep an eye on the clock during the class break, so it doesn't go over the time allotted.

Don't take too long to get the class going on actual learning. If student seating, class announcements, and casual conversation go on too long (the clock will tell you), it's time to streamline your opening procedures.

Don't let one person monopolize class-time. If you have a student who likes to take the floor, yet contributes little to class learning, you will save precious time for everyone if you silence him and give others a chance. (And the best way to silence him is for the group to exert the discipline. See Chapter II.)

Get Ready In Good Time

Poorly prepared teachers waste many minutes of class-time while they write material on the board . . . distribute papers and other informational matter . . . set up film and slide equipment . . . jobs that should have been done before the students arrived.

You can avoid this by making a point of arriving at least 15 minutes before the class is scheduled to begin . . . and by enlisting the help of a student in setting up equipment, visual aids, and the like.

Most effective time-saver of all is good lesson-planning—done well in advance of each class. Careful planning ensures that every minute of classtime is used for a purpose; it eliminates the need for time-killing "busy work." Advance planning gives you time to assemble exhibits, visual aids, and other instructional presentations. It gives you time to contact guest speakers or demonstrators (last-minute requests to busy men may find them with another engagement for that night). Advance planning gives you time to try out new methods or teaching techniques; it gives you time to view that educational film before showing it in class (it may be a dud, a real time-waster . . . better to find that out in advance, so you can look for a substitute demonstration.)

Advance viewing of film slides, and other visual aids will give you a chance to organize productive follow-up activities for the class. You'll find yourself jotting down topics for class discussion, as well as concepts, problems, and questions suggested by the materials being viewed. Ideas for outside reading, written reports, quizzes, chalkboard outlines, and other learning activities will occur to you when you take time for a personal preview of your visual aids.

Student Time Savers

Adult students are pressed for time. Most of them are holding down fulltime jobs, maintaining a home, bringing up children. Many of them lose interest in their adult class because they cannot find time to study or do outside reading. It is up to the teacher to help these students discover how to make the best use of the time available to them in every 24-hour day. One way to do this is to involve the students in a discussion of how to make the best use of time during the class period. Include in the discussion the setting up of standards for promptness and socializing as well as some considerations of the "pace" at which instruction should take place.

You will also help the students "save time" if you take some class time to go over with students the suggestions for outside study found in Chapter IX.

How Adult Students Waste Time

Adult teachers have contributed the following list of ways in which adult students let precious time dribble through their fingers:

- Arriving late at class
- Being absent frequently
- Not paying attention during class

- Digressing from the topic during discussion
- Taking too long and too many breaks
- Belaboring small issues
- Inadequate preparation
- Poor study habits

A Final Caution

Important as it is not to "waste" time, it is equally important to remember to take time for necessary classroom activities. One of the most important of these is to spend sufficient class time helping individual class members develop sufficient feelings of support and acceptance of each other that the climate for learning which was described in Chapter II can take place.

Just as it is important that sufficient time be spent on aircraft maintenance to make certain that the plane flies properly, so must time be taken in a class to make certain that the students work together as an effective learning unit. Still further suggestions on what is required to maintain the kind of classroom atmosphere which influences adults to stay with their studying rather than to drop out is presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW TO AVOID DROP-OUTS

WHY DO THEY ENROLL?

When an adult shows up for some adult education activity, you can bet that he has run a mental and physical obstacle course to get there. Fatigue, the weather, finding a place to park the car, inertia, family responsibilities, and social demands are just some of the barriers he may have had to overcome. Yet he does show up. Considering the very high initial desire to participate, why is this same adult often a potential drop-out?

To find the answer, we need to consider why he came in the first place. Was it sheer love of learning? Was it just the need to get new information, new skills, new knowledges? Not entirely, says Alvin Zander, (director, Research Center for Group Dynamics, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan). In a study he made several years ago, Dr. Zander concluded that more than two-thirds of the public school adult education students he interviewed came to class for some other reason than the course content. Most teachers and leaders of adults will readily agree with his conclusion that adults participate in educational activities to make friends, get away from the house awhile, or learn something about their latent talents as well as to acquire information or learn a skill.

HOW TO MEET THE NEEDS

As a teacher of adults, you must be sensitive to a student's personal and psychological needs as well as to his intellectual needs. Unless those personal (or social, or recreational, or call it what you will) needs are met satisfactorily, the student may not stay around very long.

These special needs will vary but most adult students have these in common:

They need to find some sense of personal worth, to discover ways of being usefully influential, and to truly participate in the activities of the group. They need to have a part in working out the goals of the program and they need the chance to discuss the subject matter not only with the teacher, but with all the other members of the class.

The teachers observed by Zander did use the discussion method—designed to get involvement of the students and meet their needs for participation—but for at least 40 percent of the time, the teachers were observed to participate at the rate of almost one comment for every comment made by any student. One-third of the students did all the talking in each class and they made two comments to the teacher for every one that they made to a fellow class member. Thus, because of this kind of lopsided discussion pattern, chances to meet the need for building relationships with other people were limited largely to a relationship between the teacher and each student.

The students, in follow-up interviews, said that they liked their fellow class members more than they liked the content of their courses and that they disliked the teaching methods more than the content.

WHY DO THEY DROP OUT?

Not all adult students who fail to come back week after week are drop-outs because some of their complex personal needs are not being met. It may be some of the other things mentioned—fatigue, the weather, or despair at not finding a place to park the car. In 1957, the staff of the Knoxville, Tenn., Adult Education Program surveyed its drop-outs and came up with reasons like these: When my children weren't ailing, my car was.—We should be about through with the childhood diseases, and I hope sincerely to resume classes next year.—We moved to Dallas in November.—I have entered another high school.—My husband re-enlisted last month in the Navy and, of course, that is the reason he dropped out of school.—This questionnaire was sent to my son. He is employed by a construction laboratory and is on duty in Rockwood. We hope he will return to school when it is convenient.

But If It Isn't The Weather

External conditions, like those cited in the Knoxville survey are pretty much beyond the control of the adult education teacher and no amount

of informal coffee breaks can change them. But when the drop-out potential may be the result of internal classroom conditions, then it is time for the teacher to take stock. Fortunately, there are some clear-cut danger signals that frequently rouse the teacher's attention when the classroom situation is not contributing fully to the learning process.

Signs Of Dissatisfaction

Adult students will begin to show signs of dissatisfaction when a course fails to meet their needs adequately. Spotting those warning signs early, analyzing them carefully, and moving to correct them quickly often can shore up the waning interest of students and lead to continued improvements in the teaching design. Look for these signs of apathy:

1. Irregular attendance. When a student attends several consecutive sessions then misses two out of the next four, he may be a potential drop-out.
2. Poor quality of preparation. If a student is inattentive in class, if he fails to enter into discussions, or if he is obviously not prepared for discussions, it may mean he is no longer finding what he first expected from the activity.
3. Erratic attention in class. Daydreaming, remaining silent during class discussions, or returning late from class "breaks" repeatedly, all are warning signs of low involvement.

SOME CORRECTIVE MEASURES

When signs of apathy appear, it's time for you to muster all your teaching skill and understanding. You must try to analyze the problem, to see both your part and the students' in the difficulty. Sometimes these steps can be taken directly in the classroom. Often, it means a personal conversation between you and the student. Consider these measures:

1. Undertake periodic class surveys of how well the class is meeting the needs of the students. Sometimes this can best be done by general discussion in class; sometimes by a questionnaire such as shown at the end of this chapter.
2. Personal interview. After class or during a "break" let the student know of your concern and your interest in him and his work. Tell him you'd like to talk with him about the class. A friendly, informal

conversation over a cup of coffee may bring out the problem and suggest a workable solution.

3. Guidance counseling. Every teacher does a certain amount of guidance counseling, consciously or otherwise. But sometimes the situation calls for someone with special training in that field. When a guidance problem arises that suggests to you the need for a trained counselor, suggest such a visit to the student. Make the appointment for him and go along with him to make introductions. Reassure the student, if it seems necessary, that the visit in no way sets him apart from the rest of the class. The counselor, after all, is an expert who is better qualified than the teacher to answer some technical questions, and help the student take a better look at himself or the learning situation.

4. Private tutoring. This is an "above and beyond the call of duty" action. Very few adult education administrators would ask or expect teachers to do free tutoring. Yet it is being done and not infrequently. A few "after class" sessions with a student often can totally eliminate a problem and reverse a tendency to drop out.

5. Variations in teaching design. Individuals learn differently and different groups of individuals do not always respond to the same teaching stimuli. Presenting more factual information, modifying the subject matter sequence, asking the group if more time is required for review, substituting demonstrations performed by students for those performed by the teacher (or vice versa)—may reawaken learning interests of the class.

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

There is something about anonymity that brings out the truth in people. An informal class survey, such as the one below, followed by class discussion of the results, often will give you an indication of the extent to which you are meeting the needs and interests of your class. Conduct the survey whenever you feel you need more information about the effectiveness of your teaching. Instruct the students not to sign their names and to express themselves freely. Let them know that the purpose of the survey is solely to help you give them the kind of course they want, or feel they need.

CLASS SURVEY

1. Have you ever considered dropping out of this class?.....Yes.....No
2. Whichever way you checked the above question, please state below why you checked it the way you did. ----------
   ---
   ---
3. If you were to drop out (for reasons other than it being physically impossible for you to attend), how do you think you would feel about it if the teacher tried to "follow up" with a letter or telephone call? Check one or more.
   a. Think it none of his business -------
   b. Would be O.K., but I expect I would probably have a hard time giving the real reason -------
   c. Would probably be pleased to know that my attendance was missed -------
   d. Other ----------

CHAPTER IX

HOW TO HELP ADULTS STUDY

THE FIRST-WEEK PANIC

The mere thought of learning how to study all over again is, to put it mildly, unsettling to many prospective adult students. If they do overcome that fear and enroll in a course, the initial difficulty in concentrating, practicing new skills, remembering facts and figures, reading with a purpose, and finding time to study can be so unnerving that they are tempted to throw up their hands and drop out of the course. True, many of those same students grit their teeth and struggle along until their study skills are sharpened and polished. Then they discover the real satisfaction of learning. But the adult student who relearns study habits and techniques right at the outset of his adult education experience, will be a happier, better adjusted, more proficient learner.

The teacher of adults can relieve the anxiety of those first tension-ridden weeks by trying to understand the adult student's feelings and offering him helpful suggestions for effective study.

HOW TO CONCENTRATE

With a family in the house, conditions are not always ideal for concentration on studies. Here are some suggestions you may want to make to your students:

- Assemble beforehand all the tools and reading materials needed during the study session. Ambling around the house, looking for a sharp pencil or for the dictionary, will only get you involved in conversations, in peeks at a TV show, or other distracting and time-consuming influences.
- Try to study in a room apart from the rest of the family and its activities. Use a desk or set up a card table for your books and papers. The very fact that a person goes away from the family—

into a separate room with the door closed—will prepare his mind for concentration and learning.

- Jerk your mind back in line the moment it wanders. Don't give it time to get deeply involved in thoughts not on the subject. (Useful device: Place a check-mark on a piece of paper every time your mind wanders. Trying to keep down the number of marks keeps your mind on your work.)
- Ask yourself questions about the material you are studying, to bring your mind back to your work and to keep it there.

HOW TO LISTEN — AND LEARN MORE

Adult students do much of their learnings by listening, but if their minds wander, if they are not good listeners, their learning suffers. Suggest to your students they may be able to improve their listening ability in the following ways:

- Listen for the basic thought. The title (if any) of the talk, is the first clue. Ask yourself questions. "Is he for the subject or against it?" Listen hard to discover the single major point he is trying to make.
- Listen with pencil in hand. Jot down important points the teacher makes . . . the practical tips a guest speaker gives . . . "key words" that will help you remember.
- Listen for use. If the speaker is a poor one, and your attention refuses to stay put, try this idea: Listen hard to find things in the speech you can put to practical use in your life. You'll find something—even if it's how to avoid the public-speaking mistakes he is making!

HOW TO READ — AND LEARN

If you teach a course that requires reading—whether it is a textbook or outside reading—your students may have trouble learning how to get the most out of the reading material. Perhaps their study habits have slipped a bit since they were last in school or, in some cases, perhaps they did not get the most out of reading when they were in school. In any case, the following techniques should help them get the most out of reading assignments.

- First, read the entire assignment—quickly. Skim through the pages. Read the section headings. Read the first and last sentence of each paragraph and the summary at the end of the chapter. By this time you have a good idea of the main theme of the chapter. You know, generally, what it's all about.
- Re-read the pages slowly, pencil in hand. Read hard sentences over and over until you understand them. Then rewrite them in your own words. Underline with your pencil the important "key" sentence in each paragraph (it's usually the opening sentence.) Feel free to mark in your textbook, if it belongs to you. Use a colored pencil if you like. It speeds up your learning. Look up the words you don't know. If they are technical words you need to remember—write them down on file cards, along with their meanings. You can review them later.
- Ask yourself questions. After you have read the assignment slowly and thoroughly, ask yourself questions about it and answer them out loud. This is one of the best ways to dig out the heart of a subject, and to remember it. Experts say that, unless you recite in this way, you probably will forget 90 percent of what you have learned within two weeks!

This chapter is based on material in the NAPSAE publication: ***HOW ADULTS CAN LEARN MORE—FASTER.*** Other chapters tell adult learners how to become better group participants, how to listen and take notes, how to train themselves to read faster, how to study for and take examinations, and how to use community resources to boost their learning. (Order form at back of this book.)

MORE TIPS TO GIVE YOUR STUDENTS ON TACKLING READING ASSIGNMENTS

- Put that pencil to work. A pencil and scratch paper are your good right-hand men when you are studying printed material. Jot down thoughts that occur to you—questions to ask when you get back with the class. Make notes of books on the same subject to look up later in the library. (Many books have bibliographies at the end of each chapter.)

- Don't neglect graphs and charts. They were put in the book to make ideas clearer. One way to make that graph or table come alive for you is to redraw it yourself on a separate sheet of paper. Try to draw it as accurately as you can, without looking at the book. You will be working a psychological trick on yourself. The physical act of drawing will imprint the graph on your mind as nothing else can.
- Figure out how you will use the information. When you come to a dull paragraph, "trick" yourself into being interested. Ask yourself, "How can this information help me? How can I put it to use in my work?" Do not say, "I must learn this." Instead say, "I'm going to learn this because it's going to be of practical use to me."
- Study the whole thing again tomorrow! The following advice is given to Air Force officers who have returned to academic study: "Few experiences are so vivid that we learn them in one trial. Generally speaking, we must repeat any operation to make it our own. Material studied for an hour a day for four days, or even an hour a week for four weeks, will be remembered much better than material studied four hours one day and never reviewed."
- Use the study-aids at the end of each chapter. Most textbooks have review questions, self-tests, summaries, outlines at the end of each chapter. Do not skip over these. USE THEM. You may also find a list of projects that will help you put your learnings to use. Do at least one of these for each chapter.
- Get help from your family. You might as well get your husband or wife involved in your study session. Give them the book and tell them to ask you questions. They can turn each paragraph heading into a question . . . or they can use the questions at the end of the chapter.

TRAINING THE MEMORY

"Learning by rote" has been outmoded in education circles for many years. Yet there is no doubt that a well-trained memory can aid a student in his education. What teacher does not want his students to retain whatever new knowledge is gained? There are tricks of memorization. Anyone can master them. Advise your students to try these methods the next time they have to commit anything to memory:

- Before you start memorizing anything, read it over from beginning to end. Understand it.
- Don't try to cram your memory. Don't try to learn a page of material all in one sitting. Take a breather from time to time.
- If you are a student in a language class trying to learn to spell a particularly tough word (for you), try turning the letters into a silly sentence. Nancy Ate Ice Very Easily.
- Always "overlearn." Once you have committed something to memory, wait a day or so and study it once more. Research into the psychology of learning has shown that "overlearning" helps you remember the information longer.
- Put the information to use right away. For example, if you are adding new French words to your vocabulary, start using them in conversation as soon as possible. One of the most effective ways to remember anything is to use the information in your daily life as soon and as often as possible.
- Find the memory trick that fits your "type." Some people find it easier to remember things they see, others can best remember things they hear. Through trial and error, find out which of the following ways works best for you: Reciting the material aloud . . . writing it down over and over again . . . visualizing it in your mind's eye.

CHAPTER X

HOW GROUP INVOLVEMENT BOOSTS LEARNING

If you encourage all your students to help each other learn . . . if you involve all members of the group in planning the learning activities . . . you have as many "teaching assistants" as there are students. You and your students, working together, create the best conditions for learning.

How can you do this? First you need to discover whether your class is a "group" or a "collection of individuals?" There's a big difference between the two.

The Class as a Collection of Individuals

If yours is a "collection of individuals" situation, your students have not accepted learning as a common task. The following conditions probably exist:

- Each student is in a highly competitive position with every other student. It sometimes seems as though all students are in a game with each other—some winning and some losing in the job of learning skills or knowledge offered by the course.
- Because all your students do not have equal competitive skills and instinct, some become worried about constantly coping with classmates and, fearing failure and lack of prestige, may become apathetic.
- Because of the competitive situation, some students fall behind and may even become dropouts. With only their loyalty to you or their interest in the subject matter to hold them in class, either or both ties may snap and the student may not return to class.

The Class as a United Group

When the entire class accepts the responsibility of helping each member learn, the following conditions usually exist:

- Teachers and students show concern for elements in the instruction that prevent some students from learning.
- The class carefully considers how "we" (teachers and students) can improve the learning situation for each student.
- Students and teacher alike seek ways of bringing timid or withdrawn persons into discussions.
- Individual students, feeling at home in the group and knowing that they can count on all members for support, tend to become less timid and withdrawn. Their motivation to learn is stronger. Motivation to learn does not come only from the desire of the student to acquire more knowledge. (A student may have a desire for knowledge, and still drop out of class.) Equally important to the individual may be such things as: (a) acceptance by other class members, (b) feeling that he belongs to a group which is doing significant things, (c) working with other people on worthwhile projects, and (d) having occasional opportunities to try out leadership skills.

It is sometimes said that undesirable results may come from involving all the students in helping each other learn. First—students may become so concerned with learning about learning that they don't learn much about auto mechanics, American history, or whatever it is they are studying. Second—bright and ambitious students, because of their concern for the slower ones, may not get as much as they should out of the class.

These questions have been examined in a number of research studies. It has been found that, as a general rule, classes which involve the entire group in the learning process tend to learn more. New subject matter can be presented most rapidly, and individual achievement is highest.

Research over the past few years has found that the most effective leader encourages members of his group to take an active part in group affairs. The true leader, in short, is not the "You listen, I'll do the talking" type of person. Instead, he skillfully helps others in the group to be creative and productive.

This concept of teaching actually makes possible more effective learning of subjects. It also develops each class member's ability to think of new ideas to cooperate with others, to "come out of himself," to have confidence in his own skills and abilities.

How can you bring about this team spirit in your adult group? Here are methods many teachers have found successful:

- Spend some or all of your first class session discussing with your students what the goals of the class should be . . . what they expect to learn . . . what they will be using the knowledge for . . . what they already know about the subject . . . some activities which could bring about the learning they need. A discussion of this kind helps make the future learning activities of the class something created and shared by the entire class. The students will be more interested in activities they help develop than in things you alone think of and tell them to do.

- Every once in a while, as the course proceeds, use class time to discuss problems students are encountering. You will hear about blocks to student learning which may never have occurred to you . . . comments like the following: "It's so stuffy in here I can't concentrate." Or, "I can't see why they expect me to know all this stuff about the Civil War to get my high school equivalency certificate." Or, "The teacher went over the material in the first part of the book so fast I didn't get it at all."

- Enlist class help in working out learning experiences. For example, you might say: "We have a chance to have Mr. Jones, of the Highway Department, visit us next week. Should we invite him? How can we make best use of his specialized knowledge while he is with us? Would you like to work out a list of questions to ask him, in advance?" If specialists or outside experts have visited this group before, you might want to say: "Based on the meeting we had several weeks ago with Mr. Smith, can you think of any ways we can get more value out of such class visits?" This kind of procedure can be used with any learning activity, not just with resource persons. Involving the class in your planning has two positive results: (a) It helps the students themselves to think more deeply about what they are learning, and why they are learning it, and (b) it provides you with new information about the motivations, the understanding or misunderstanding, and the learning difficulties, of your students. As you analyze the comments and suggestions made by individual students, you will be able to teach with greater understanding of their needs.

The teaching-learning process which goes on in your class takes place between people . . . between you and your students . . . between your students and each other. That is why *feelings* play such a strong part in learning—or not learning. Here are some kinds of feelings that affect the learning of class members: strong individual feelings for or against certain class members; strong individual feelings for or against you; feelings for or against partiality on your part; feelings of inadequacy on the part of individual students.

The more you know about these feelings, the better equipped you are to cope with them, and release each student's capacity to learn. The more opportunities you give your group to take part in planning and evaluating, the freer they will feel to reveal these feelings to you.

If this book has been helpful, you may be interested in other titles published by NAPSAE for teachers and students:

- **Techniques for Teachers of Adults** is a four-page monthly newsletter issued eight times a year. Easy-to-read non-technical language, up-to-the-minute methods and ideas. Popular with teachers, also with administrators, as inservice training tool. Annual subscription, which includes Associate Membership, $3.

- **Teaching Reading to Adults,** a handbook for everyone who teaches reading to adults at any level. Tells how to test reading levels, describes teaching techniques, suggests materials for classroom use in elementary, intermediate, and developmental stages. 72 pages. Single copy, $1. 2-9 copies, 10 percent discount; 10 or more copies, 20 percent discount.

- **How Adults Can Learn More—Faster** is NAPSAE's all-time best seller, now translated into three languages. Tells adults how to study, take tests, read faster, memorize, get more out of group participation. 48 pages. Single copy, $1. 2-9 copies, 10 percent discount; 10 or more copies, 20 percent discount.

Quantities

_____ copies of **A Treasury of Techniques for Teaching Adults,** $1

_____ subscriptions to **Techniques** Newsletter, $3

_____ copies of **Teaching Reading to Adults,** $1

_____ copies of **How Adults Can Learn More—Faster,** $1

Payment Enclosed ☐ Send Bill ☐

(Orders Under $2 **Must** Be Accompanied by Cash or They Cannot be Filled)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Clip out entire page and send to: **NAPSAE**
1201 Sixteenth St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Join The
National Association for Public School Adult Education
For Regular Adult Education Helps

- Active Membership is open to present and former members of the adult education staffs of state and local public school systems. Active members receive the following periodicals: **PULSE of Public School Adult Education . . . SWAP SHOP for Administrators . . . TECHNIQUES For Teachers of Adults . . . the ADULT EDUCATION ALMANAC AND DIRECTORY.** Annual dues, $10.

- Associate Membership is open to anyone who is interested or involved in teaching adults. Associate members receive the newsletter **TECHNIQUES For Teachers of Adults.** Annual dues, $3.

- Communications Service is available to any individual or organization with an interest in adult education. Subscribers receive all publications and services made available to Active Members (above). Annual subscription rate, $10.

Please enroll me as

☐ Active Member

☐ Associate Member

☐ Communications Service Subscriber

Enclosed is: ☐ Check ☐ Money Order ☐ Purchase Order

Name:.....

Title:.....

Address:.....

City:..... State:..... Zip Code:.....

Clip out entire page and send to: **NAPSAE**
1201 Sixteenth St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

ERIC Clearinghouse
JAN 29 1969
on Adult Education